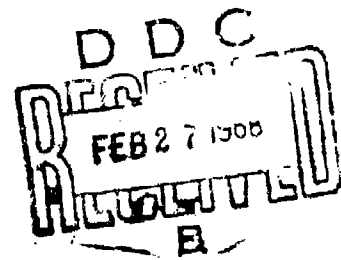


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EVOLUTION OF SOVIET MILITARY POLICY

Thomas W. Wolfe

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EVOLUTION OF SOVIET MILITARY POLICY

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As it has evolved over the past couple of decades, Soviet military policy has been influenced by a variety of factors, including the experience of World War II, the postwar technological revolution, the interplay of bureaucratic and elite politics, the leadership's perception of external threats, and the constraints imposed by resources, geography, and so on. Above all, perhaps, the development of Soviet military policy has reflected the differing conceptions which have informed Soviet foreign policy under successive leaderships from Stalin and Khrushchev to the present Brezhnev-Kosygin regime. Stalin, for example, pursued a foreign policy of essentially continental dimensions, limiting his expansionist aims to communization of areas

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which lay immediately around the Soviet periphery, and showing himself loath to commit the Soviet Union, except perhaps ideologically, to wider global obligations.

In the Khrushchev era, by contrast, the Soviet Union was transformed into a global power, breaking out of its continental shell to assert its influence and interests in every quarter of the world. Under Khrushchev's successors, likewise, the Soviet Union has continued to find itself increasingly committed not only to worldwide competition with the United States, but also to coping with the problems created by the rise of a rival seat of Communist power in Peking. This shift of focus from continental to global foreign policy interests during the post-World War II period has been accompanied by a number of basic long-term changes in Soviet military policy. Before examining trends in Soviet military policy under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, let us begin with a brief review of the principal changes which occurred in the years from the end of the war down to the autumn of 1964, or the years embracing the latter part of the Stalinist period and the decade of Khrushchev's rule.

Shifts in Military Policy from Stalin to Khrushchev

In Stalin's day, Soviet military policy remained oriented largely in a continental direction. Although

one of the important tasks which Stalin had set for himself after World War II was to break the American nuclear monopoly, the other principal military task on his post-war agenda was the relatively straightforward one of holding Western Europe hostage to preponderant Soviet continental military power while the consolidation of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe was being accomplished. Comparatively little attention was given under Stalin to other more complex questions, such as determining the political utility of military power in the nuclear age and developing new military forces and doctrines responsive to the changing technological and political environment of the modern world. It was left largely to Nikita Khrushchev in the decade after Stalin's death to preside over the process of incorporating the new weapons of the nuclear-missile age into the Soviet armed forces, along with appropriate concepts for their use and control.

For various reasons, this proved to be a somewhat difficult process, and one which Khrushchev, despite his innovating reforms, never managed fully to carry through. Among other things, Khrushchev found himself wrestling with the paradox that even as technology invested military power with an ever-increasing destructiveness and coercive

potential, constraints upon its use grew apace, tending to multiply the risks and narrow the opportunities for turning military power to political advantage. Although this was a universal paradox confronting not the Soviet leadership alone, it had particularly damaging effects upon the doctrines of a Marxist-Leninist leadership elite schooled to take a tough-minded view of force and violence as agents of revolutionary sociopolitical change. It led to revision of such Leninist tenets as the inevitability of war between the rival Communist and capitalist systems, helping to persuade Khrushchev that a new world war was too dangerous to serve as the "midwife" for another round of Communist advance, and that even lesser forms of revolutionary conflict might escalate into a large nuclear conflagration which could jeopardize the Soviet system itself.

In the immediate field of military policy, the organizational and conceptual reforms which Khrushchev imposed upon the Soviet military establishment -- and which generated a good deal of resistance from conservative-minded elements among the marshals -- went only part way toward reshaping Soviet military power for support of a political strategy that committed the Soviet Union increasingly to global competition with the West. Initially,

Khrushchev's military programs were oriented mainly toward creating a nuclear deterrent posture, with chief emphasis given to improving strategic offensive-defensive capabilities as a counter to the strategic nuclear forces of the United States. Only gradually toward the end of the Khrushchev decade did a few Soviet military authorities manage to gain recognition for the argument that there was also a need for better capabilities to project Soviet conventional military power beyond the continental confines of Eurasia for such purposes as asserting a Soviet presence in distant areas of political contention or for possible use in local conflict situations in which it might not be expedient to invoke the threat of "inevitable" nuclear holocaust.¹

However, neither the task of improving the Soviet strategic posture nor that of developing more mobile and versatile general purpose forces could be said to have been satisfactorily accomplished by the end of the Khrushchev decade. In strategic forces, despite notable

¹For a more detailed examination of the military policy trends of the Khrushchev period, see the present author's Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1964.

advances in missile, space, and missile-defense technology under Khrushchev, the Soviet Union had failed to catch up with the United States. Indeed, the effect of these technological advances and of Khrushchev's efforts to exploit them politically during the "missile-gap" scare of the late fifties and early sixties had been to spur American strategic programs, leaving the Soviet Union with respect to "forces-in-being" in a strategic position still clearly second-best to that of the United States. Likewise, although a start was made toward acquiring more mobile and flexible conventional military capabilities, and especially toward expansion of Soviet maritime capacity, the Soviet Union still lagged far behind the West in most of the elements of globally-maneuverable military power that would be needed should the USSR wish to project its military presence into areas of the world well beyond the periphery of the Soviet bloc.

The Military Policy Approach of the Brezhnev-Kosygin Regime

In briefest outline, this essentially was the background against which Khrushchev's successors took over the responsibility for Soviet military policy in the autumn of 1964. Under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, there has been no radical change of direction in Soviet foreign

policy nor in the aspirations of the Soviet leadership to exert an influence upon world affairs comparable to that of the other superpower of the contemporary epoch, the United States. Neither has there been the kind of radical departure from previous Soviet military thought and practice which marked the Khrushchev period off from the Stalinist one.

What does seem to have happened, however, has been the pursuit of a patient but persistent effort to bring the Soviet Union's over-all military posture into better line with its growing global obligations and interests, prompted perhaps by the belief of the new leadership that it must provide itself with a wider range of military options and divest itself of the political liability of having a markedly second-best strategic posture in any future East-West confrontations that may arise -- a liability that was dramatically driven home during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 in the latter days of the Khrushchev decade.

Doubtless, the war in Vietnam, which entered a new phase of mounting intensity in early 1965 shortly after the new Soviet regime came to office, served to fortify the conviction of the Kremlin leadership that measures

to improve the USSR's military posture were in order. Thus, despite the high priority set by the regime upon major investment programs and various reforms to restore economic growth and performance, the Soviet leaders have found it expedient to make successive annual increases in the Soviet military budget, a diversion of resources hardly calculated to help them meet their domestic economic goals. The Brezhnev-Kosygin regime's first military budget, for example, was 12.8 billion rubles, for 1965. Since then, the figure has risen each year: 1966 -- 13.4; 1967 -- 14.5; 1968 -- 16.7 billion rubles.² This upward trend in Soviet military expenditure can not be attributed solely, of course, to the effects of the deepening conflict in Southeast Asia. Rather, a substantial share of the rising outlays, as we shall see in a moment, has gone into strategic programs which, given the long "lead times" involved, were set in motion well before it was apparent what turn the Vietnam war might take.

Although the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime may ultimately find, as did Khrushchev, that many of the military policy problems on its agenda will remain essentially intractable,

²These figures are for the publicly-announced military budgets. It should be noted that they do not take into account additional sums for defense purposes generally thought to be buried in other parts of the state budget.

the steps it has taken thus far have produced some noteworthy changes in the Soviet armed forces and may have significant effects in the coming decade on the military power relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States. Let us next turn then to the principal military policy trends under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, considering first its efforts to repair the Soviet Union's strategic posture.

Trends Affecting the Soviet Strategic Posture

Soviet efforts in the strategic field have been expended largely in two directions -- toward buildup of the strategic delivery forces and toward strengthening of strategic defenses, including the initiation of ABM deployment. These efforts reflect the concept that a complementary "mix" of offensive and defensive forces should be sought, a concept more congenial to orthodox Soviet military thinking than giving preference to either the offense or defense alone.³

³One of the sources of friction between Khrushchev and some of his more conservative-minded marshals had been the latter's belief that he was putting "one-sided" emphasis on the importance of ballistic missiles alone. Although Khrushchev's successors seem to have avoided such friction by not taking up extreme positions on matters of strategic doctrine, it should be noted that in Soviet military literature itself there has continued to be some debate over the relative value of active strategic defenses versus the offense.

When Khrushchev's successors first came to office, however, it was by no means clear how vigorously they would seek to improve the Soviet Union's strategic position vis-à-vis the United States. Their initial approach did indicate, if nothing else, a determination to strengthen the technological base upon which any effort to alter the strategic balance would ultimately depend. Appropriations for scientific research were stepped up,⁴ and, as made evident by public display of new families of offensive and defensive weapons, the Soviet military research and development program was pushed even more energetically than before. It was only after the new leaders had been in power a year or two, however, that it gradually became apparent that they had committed themselves to a substantial buildup of Soviet strategic delivery forces.

As indicated by informed accounts which began to appear in the U.S. press by the summer of 1966, an accelerated program of Soviet ICBM deployment had been

⁴Published Soviet allocations for scientific research, of which a substantial share goes to support military research and development, have risen as follows:
1963 -- 4.7 billion rubles; 1964 -- 5.2; 1965 -- 5.4;
1966 -- 6.5; 1967 -- 7.2; 1968 -- 7.9.

set in motion in the Soviet Union.⁵ By the beginning of 1967, the number of ICBM launchers reportedly had reached around 450, while little more than a year later the operational ICBM total was in the neighborhood of 700. These figures may be compared with a total deployment of fewer than 200 ICBM launchers during the entire Khrushchev period. Not less significant than the rapid growth of numbers was a shift to new types of missiles in dispersed and hardened sites, in contrast with the ICBM force of the Khrushchev period, much of which consisted of early-generation missiles of "soft-site" configuration.

Meanwhile, as emphasized in the late Marshal Malinovsky's report at the 23rd Party Congress in April 1966, "special importance" has been attached to developing mobile land-based missiles for the strategic missile forces,⁶ a step which would further diversify the Soviet Union's strategic delivery potential. Similarly, the

⁵ Among pertinent accounts of this buildup, see: Richard J. Whelan, "The Shifting Equation of Nuclear Defense," Fortune, June 1, 1967, p. 87; The Military Balance, 1967-1968, Institute for Strategic Studies, London, September 1967, p. 5.

⁶ Krasnaya zvezda (Red Star), April 2, 1966.

Soviet Union has shown active interest in development of a fractional orbital delivery system, which, as suggested by U.S. defense officials, may represent another effort to diversify the Soviet delivery potential by reducing the warning time available through presently deployed American detection systems.⁷ Finally, as Soviet military authorities have repeatedly reminded us, the Soviet Union not only has given a high priority to missile-launching submarines, but continues to count upon the additional contribution to its strategic delivery capabilities provided by long-range bombers equipped with air-to-surface missiles for "stand-off" attacks against enemy targets.⁸ With respect to the former, recent reports in the Western press have

⁷See, for example, Secretary McNamara's statement at a press conference dealing with Soviet development of a fractional orbital delivery system, or FOBS, The New York Times, November 4, 1967. While noting that FOBS might be intended to reduce the warning time available through conventional radar, Mr. McNamara stated that U.S. development of "over-the-horizon" radar would make it possible to "recapture" any lost warning time.

⁸See Marshal Malinovskii's April 1966 speech cited in footnote 6 above and his article, "October and the Building of the Armed Forces," Kommunist, No. 1, January 1967, p. 34. According to Western estimates, the Soviet Union possesses about 200 heavy bombers (M-4 "Bisons" and TU-95 "Bears," some of which are used as tankers), and about 35 submarines capable of firing an average of three ballistic missiles each. In addition, about 40 submarines are equipped to fire cruise-type winged missiles, which could be used against land targets but which probably have a primary mission against naval forces. See The Military Balance, 1967-1968, pp. 7, 8.

indicated that the USSR is now adding to its missile-launching submarine fleet a new class of boats with missile-carrying capacity approximating that of U.S. Polaris-type submarines.⁹

Parallel to the above-described trends affecting Soviet strategic delivery capabilities, another important step taken by the new regime to bolster the Soviet strategic posture was its decision to go ahead with deployment of antiballistic missile defenses. The Soviet ABM program, one may recall, had its inception under Khrushchev, who as early as July 1962 made the much-quoted boast that the Soviet Union had developed an antimissile missile that could "hit a fly in outer space."¹⁰ Whether actual deployment of an ABM system had begun under Khrushchev and then was halted for technical, economic, or other reasons is not entirely clear,¹¹ but at any rate it was only after

⁹ See Hanson W. Baldwin, "Soviet Military Advances Pose a Challenge for U.S.," The New York Times, October 30, 1967. The U.S. Polaris submarines have 16 missile-launching tubes, whereas the earlier Soviet missile-launching submarines carried an average of only about three ballistic missiles, as previously noted.

¹⁰ The New York Times, July 17, 1962.

¹¹ There is, for example, some indication that a defense complex intended to employ an early type of ABM missile (the so-called "Griffon") may have been initiated around Leningrad in 1962 and then halted, perhaps because of technical difficulties. See Hedrick Smith, in The New York Times, January 29, 1967.

the new Brezhnev-Kosygin regime assumed power that it became unmistakably evident that the Soviet Union had taken the historical first-step of deploying ABM defenses. Official U.S. cognizance of "considerable evidence" that the Soviet Union had initiated ABM deployment was given by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in an interview in November 1966.¹²

As numerous accounts now available indicate, the Soviet Union has installed a second-generation ABM defense system around Moscow, employing the so-called "Galosh" missile displayed on several occasions in Red Square parades.¹³ Although both the effectiveness of the presently-existing Soviet ABM defenses and the extent to which additional defenses may be scheduled for deployment elsewhere throughout the Soviet Union are matters which remain

¹²The New York Times, November 11, 1966.

¹³See, for example, Hanson W. Baldwin, in The New York Times, November 27, 1966; Henry Gemmill, in Wall Street Journal, December 14, 1966; The Soviet Military Technological Challenge, Center for Strategic Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., September 1967, p. 90.

unclarified at this writing,¹⁴ the Soviet leadership has thus far proved unreceptive to American proposals for negotiations aimed at some sort of mutual freeze on further ABM deployment, linked perhaps with arms control limitations on strategic offensive systems as well.

When President Johnson's appeal to the Soviet leadership in January 1967 to discuss an ABM moratorium went officially unanswered for many months,¹⁵ it was conjectured that internal policy differences in Moscow might explain the Soviet government's reluctance to respond.¹⁶ Again,

¹⁴As widely-noted in the U.S. press (see, for example, Hanson W. Baldwin, in The New York Times, February 5, 1967), there has been uncertainty whether the so-called "Tallin system," covering an extensive geographical area, was designed primarily for defense against aircraft or as part of the ABM program. At this writing, the former interpretation seems to have gained ground. For discussion of this question, see the present author's The Soviet Union and the ABM Question, statement furnished to the Subcommittee on Military Applications, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, U.S. Congress, November 7, 1967.

¹⁵President Johnson publicly urged the Soviet Union to consider an ABM moratorium in his State of the Union message of January 10, 1967, and immediately thereafter sent a personal message to the Soviet leaders via returning U.S. Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson, to help in getting ABM talks underway. Although the Soviets did not formally close the door to possible negotiations, they declined to respond to American promptings to arrange for such talks.

¹⁶For discussion of various indications of possible internal policy differences in Moscow on the question of ABM negotiations, see this author's statement cited in footnote 14 above.

when Secretary McNamara announced with obvious regret in September 1967 that the United States had decided to go forward with a "thin" and "Chinese-oriented" ABM deployment,¹⁷ it was felt in some quarters that this initiative might bring Soviet footdragging on ABM talks to an end.¹⁸ However, neither this move nor other U.S. promptings in ensuing months brought the Soviet leadership to reconsider its ABM deployment policy or to enter negotiations on the subject. Thus, although a change of Soviet attitude certainly cannot be ruled out, it would appear up to this writing at least that the Kremlin leaders remain persuaded that their ABM program promises a real improvement in the Soviet Union's relative power position, even though by spurning U.S. overtures for talks, they may forfeit the possibility of the United States agreeing to limitations on its own ABM and other strategic force programs.

Efforts to Improve the "Reach" and Mobility of Soviet Conventional Forces

The large investment of effort and resources devoted to strengthening the Soviet strategic delivery and defense

¹⁷ The New York Times, September 18, 1967.

¹⁸ See Stephen S. Rosenfeld, in The Washington Post, October 15, 1967.

forces seems to testify to the determination of the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime to erase the image of a Soviet Union strategically inferior to its major adversary. At the same time, the new regime's military policy also has involved what might be described as a parallel attempt to improve the "reach" and mobility of Soviet conventional or general purpose forces. Although this undertaking has not matched in scope and priority the effort which has gone into strengthening the Soviet strategic posture, it nevertheless represents a significant advance beyond the steps taken toward the end of the Khrushchev period to enlarge the capacity of Soviet naval forces for both "blue-water" and amphibious landing operations, and to improve the mobility of Soviet conventional military power in general.¹⁹

With regard to the former, the policies of the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime have carried further the process of transforming the Soviet navy from its traditional role as a mere adjunct to Soviet land power into an instrument for global support of Soviet interests. In the maritime

¹⁹For a fuller discussion of such steps taken both during the Khrushchev period and under his successors, see the author's The Soviet Quest for More Globally Mobile Military Power, The RAND Corporation, RM-5554-PR, December 1967, from which the present account is largely drawn.

field, as distinct from naval forces, the steady growth of the Soviet merchant fleet has continued also, reaching a level of around 10 million tons by August 1967.²⁰ Parenthetically, one should note that the Soviet naval program has been carried out along decidedly selective lines; there has been, for example, no massive new construction program of the kind necessary to create balanced naval forces in the Western sense. Primary emphasis has continued to fall upon modernizing the underseas fleet of about 400 submarines, for strategic delivery of sub-launched missiles, and for interdiction of seaborne supply lines.

According to Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, head of the Soviet navy, the submarine fleet and the naval air arm (a land-based force of some 850 aircraft) have been given "the leading place" in the buildup of Soviet naval power.²¹

²⁰Under Khrushchev, a maritime construction program was initiated which brought Soviet merchant shipping up from about 1.5 million tons in 1959 to nearly 6 million by the end of 1964. As continued under Khrushchev's successors, this program brought the Soviet merchant fleet to around 10 million tons by August 1967, placing it among the six largest in the world. See V. Bakaev, "Reform and Management," Pravda, August 1, 1967.

²¹Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, "Development of Soviet Naval Art," Morskoï sbornik (Naval Collection), No. 2, February 1967, p. 20.

The surface forces -- including some 20 cruisers, more than 100 destroyers, and a fleet of several hundred fast patrol boats -- have received a lower priority, although many of these surface units are being modernized to fire surface-to-surface and antiaircraft missiles, which of course suggests an interest in preparing them to operate in waters beyond the protective range of land-based Soviet air cover.²²

Although the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime has held back from a massive program of balanced naval expansion, various noteworthy innovations and departures from past practice have occurred during its tenure. Since the advent of the new regime, for example, Soviet submarines have regularly conducted patrols in distant ocean areas, including a much-publicized submerged cruise around the world in 1966 by several nuclear-powered subs.²³ Demonstration of a capacity for blue-water operations has not been confined to the submarine fleet; as pointed out in April 1966 by Paul Nitze, then U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Soviet

²²The Military Balance, 1967-1968, September 1967, pp. 7-8. See also Hanson W. Baldwin, in The New York Times, October 30, 1967.

²³Missiles and Rockets, April 4, 1966, p. 12.

surface units "are also developing the capability for high seas operations away from their confined home waters, replenishing at sea, as our navies long ago found advantageous."

Soviet naval authorities themselves have had occasion to speak with obvious satisfaction of the trends which have culminated in the Soviet navy's breaking out of its traditional confinement to closed seas around the Soviet littoral. Speeches marking the observance of Soviet Navy Day in July 1967 were particularly notable for frequent sounding of the theme that Soviet sea power has extended its reach to "remote areas of the world's oceans previously considered a zone of supremacy of the fleets of imperialist powers," and that its mission henceforth is to include "constantly cruising and patrolling wherever required in defense of the state interests of the Soviet Union."²⁴ Although a certain pride of service may to some extent color such utterances by various Soviet admirals, they nevertheless reflect a recognition of the changing role

²⁴ See, for example, articles by Admiral V. A. Kasatonov, Pravda, July 30, 1967, and Admiral N. Sergeyev, Sovetskaya Kirgizia, July 30, 1967. See also Paul Wohl, "Soviet Navy Gets New Orders," The Christian Science Monitor, August 9, 1967.

of Soviet sea power which is without precedent in earlier Soviet history. Certainly, the notion that the Soviet navy has the task of looking after the worldwide "state interests" of the USSR is new to the Soviet political vocabulary. The increasing incidence of harassment-type encounters at sea between Soviet and U.S. naval units in the past year or so seems to reflect this new conception of the Soviet navy's role.

Perhaps the most striking example of the Soviet navy's departure from past practice has been the establishment of what appears to be a permanent naval presence in the Mediterranean, dramatized by the conspicuous display of Soviet naval units in Mediterranean waters during and since the Arab-Israeli conflict of June 1967. The inclusion of several tank and troop landing ships in the augmented Soviet force of some 30 to 40 combat and auxiliary vessels captured particular notice during the Middle East crisis, since it was seemingly meant to convey the impression that the Soviet Union was prepared to intervene with local landing parties if necessary.²⁵ This demonstrative gesture, it

²⁵ Interestingly enough, it was only after the appearance of Soviet tank landing ships during the Arab-Israeli crisis that photos of these vessels, which are relatively new to the Soviet navy, began to be published in the Soviet press.

may be noted, was not matched by any other signs of a Soviet willingness to become militarily involved in the Arab-Israeli fighting; indeed, at the height of the six-day war, Soviet diplomacy seemed bent upon avoiding a possible military confrontation with the West.

Another notable innovation in Soviet naval policy has been the decision to build helicopter carriers, two of which reportedly have been constructed.²⁶ This development comes as the climax to a long and evidently frustrating internal Soviet debate over the pros and cons of adopting aircraft carriers. Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov, head of the Soviet navy in World War II, revealed in his memoirs in 1966 that proposals for carrier construction in the late thirties vetoed by Stalin, even though professionals on the naval staff rightly considered, according to Kuznetsov, that carrier aviation would become an indispensable element of naval power in the next war.²⁷ After World War II, the question of embarking on a carrier program arose once more, but again the decision

²⁶ The New York Times, October 23, 30, 1967.

²⁷ Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov, "Reminiscences: Before the War," International Affairs, No. 12, December 1966, p. 95.

was negative, in part evidently because catching up with the West posed too great a demand on Soviet resources, and in part, according to Admiral Gorshkov, the incumbent navy chief, because the advent of the nuclear age underscored the vulnerability of carrier forces and marked the beginning of their "irreversible decline" as the "main striking element" of modern naval power.²⁸

By electing finally to invest in helicopter carriers, the Soviets appear to have adopted a compromise that represents not a belated bid to compete with the United States in carrier aviation, but rather a strengthening of the Soviet potential for landing operations and/or submarine warfare. Which of these two latter purposes may stand higher in Soviet plans for the new helicopter carriers has not yet been made clear in Soviet military literature.

Apart from the various trends in the development of Soviet naval forces noted above, the period since Khrushchev's ouster has been marked by other developments bearing upon Soviet capacity to project military power into distant conflict situations. Airlift potential, for example, has been improved, both through technical advances

²⁸ Admiral Gorshkov, in Morskoï sbornik, February 1967, pp. 18-19.

such as new transport aircraft and air landing equipment displayed at the Moscow air show in July 1967,²⁹ and through training emphasis on airborne operations and airlift reinforcement in connection with several Warsaw Pact field exercises. Employment of the Soviet airlift potential was graphically demonstrated, incidentally, by the massive air resupply operation mounted immediately after the six-day Arab-Israeli war in June 1967 to replenish the equipment of Nasser's forces, as well as by the Soviet airlift to Yemen later in 1967 and early 1968.

Amphibious landing capacities likewise have been somewhat enhanced, not only by addition of helicopter and landing ship units mentioned previously, but also by an increase in the size of the recently reactivated Soviet marine forces, or "naval infantry," to around 6,000 to

²⁹The Moscow show included a demonstration landing of several types of missiles and self-propelled guns from AN-22 and AN-12 transports. See "Soviets Demonstrate Vertical Envelopment Capability with AN-22 Heavy Transport," Aviation Week and Space Technology, August 14, 1967, pp. 52-53. The AN-22 is an advanced heavy transport aircraft roughly comparable to the Lockheed C-5A transport under development in the United States. Soviet sources credit the AN-22, development of which was initiated in the Khrushchev period, with a range of 6000 miles with a 45-ton cargo. See Lt. Colonel E. Simakov, "Antaeus Rises Above the Earth," Soviet Military Review, No. 7, July 1966, pp. 30-31.

7000 men.³⁰ Meanwhile, the Soviet ground forces themselves, benefiting from what might be called a doctrinal backlash against Khrushchev's "one-weapon" military philosophy, are being reequipped and trained in accordance with a more explicit doctrinal recognition that Soviet forces should be prepared for a wide range of military operations below the level of general nuclear war.³¹

So much for a summary description of the principal military programs sponsored by Khrushchev's successors with respect to Soviet strategic and conventional forces. One may suppose that the present regime is hopeful that these programs will help to bring about a major change in

³⁰The Military Balance, 1967-1968, September 1967, p. 8. The Soviet marines or naval infantry were reactivated in 1964 shortly before Khrushchev's fall, after having been disbanded following World War II. Though still a relatively small force distributed among the several Soviet territorial fleets, the marines have been treated as an elite contingent, with much publicity in the Soviet press being given their role in special landing operations.

³¹For an examination of the more explicit doctrinal attention given during the post-Khrushchev period to problems of nonnuclear warfare in various potential theaters of conflict, see the author's "Soviet Military Policy at the Fifty-Year Mark," Current History, October 1967, pp. 214-216.

the familiar situation of the past two decades in which the United States enjoyed not only marked strategic superiority over the Soviet Union, but also went virtually unchallenged in its capacity to intervene locally in troubled situations around the globe. However, any new military power relationship will depend in part on how the United States chooses to respond. This being the case, the Soviet leadership may find itself in no better position than in the past to risk a direct military challenge to the West for the sake of political gains. Rather, the chief advantage to be derived from its military programs could turn out to be simply a broader range of options for moving in where Western power and influence may recede. Even so, the extent to which the Soviet leadership may care to commit its own forces in various areas of contention around the world will remain a critical question on its policy agenda. Up to now, the Kremlin leaders have displayed notable caution on this score, as illustrated by their policy toward the unresolved war in Vietnam, the next matter to which we shall briefly turn.

The Vietnam Situation and Soviet Military Policy

Although the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime has gradually increased its support of Hanoi's military effort since

early 1965, especially by furnishing SA-2 antiaircraft missiles and other air defense material,³² it has not sanctioned the formal commitment of Soviet military forces to the war in Southeast Asia. Presumably, in the interest of avoiding a direct confrontation with the United States, the Soviet leaders would prefer to keep their military involvement limited to furnishing equipment, technical advice and training, although they have occasionally spoken of permitting "volunteers" to participate, which would still be something less than formal intervention. Beyond experimenting with volunteers, the Soviet leadership's room for maneuver would seem to be constricted not only by the risk of major escalation, but by the fact that geography makes direct Soviet intervention difficult. Intermittent changes of Chinese refusal to cooperate in the overland shipment of Soviet aid to North Vietnam have pointed up this difficulty.

With regard to China, the Soviet Union evidently has had to consider military problems potentially a good deal

³²Soviet military aid to North Vietnam in the 1965-1967 period has been estimated at about \$1.1 billion. See Hedrick Smith, in The New York Times, November 5, 1967. See also joint communique, "USSR-DRV Solidarity Strengthened," Izvestia, September 24, 1967.

more serious than interference with shipments to Vietnam. In the spring of 1966, for example, the Soviet leadership reportedly felt obliged to castigate Peking for telling the Chinese people that "it is necessary to prepare themselves for a military struggle with the USSR."³³ Since that time, Sino-Soviet relations have grown still more inflamed in the climate of Mao's "cultural revolution," amid rumors of frontier clashes and mutual military precautions in the border territories of the two countries.³⁴ Although an outright military collision between the two Communist powers is still perhaps only a remote possibility, the new Soviet regime doubtless has been obliged to reassess its military preparations with such a contingency in mind. In this connection, according to Peking's allegations, there has evidently been some internal redeployment of Soviet forces in the Asian regions bordering China.³⁵

³³The New York Times, March 24, 1966.

³⁴See Victor Zorza, "Soviet Press Clamors Over Chinese Military Threat," The Washington Post, November 10, 1966; "Chinese Report Soviet Border Clash," ibid., February 14, 1967; Charles Mohr, "Observers Speculate That Tensions Along the Soviet-Chinese Border May Be Rising," The New York Times, February 21, 1967.

³⁵See remarks on this question to a group of Scandinavian journalists by Chinese Deputy Premier Chen Yi, The New York Times, July 21, 1966.

The stationing of some Soviet troops in Mongolia also has been reported.³⁶

Neither the Vietnam conflict nor friction with China, however, seems to have counseled any significant re-disposition of Soviet military power deployed against NATO Europe. For the Soviet leaders to consider troop withdrawals in Europe while the war in Vietnam continues would, of course, leave them vulnerable to Chinese allegations of "collusion" with the United States to ease the European situation and permit the transfer of American troops to Vietnam.³⁷

Sensitivity to Chinese criticism, however, probably has no more than an incidental bearing on Soviet military deployments in Europe. The main factor seems to be that, despite the war in Vietnam and the Soviet Union's increasing stake in Asian affairs generally, priority still applies to maintaining the Soviet Union's European power position and its ability to deal with the political and military problems of Europe, not the least of which, in

³⁶ AP Moscow dispatch, "Soviet Troops Protecting Mongolia from Chinese," The Washington Evening Star, September 14, 1967.

³⁷ For a sample of such allegations, see the Peking Review, No. 8, February 18, 1966, p. 10.

Soviet eyes, is that of keeping a resurgent Germany in check. Indeed, Soviet spokesmen under the new regime have reemphasized that the main focus of Soviet interest continues to lie in Europe, where, as the Kremlin sees it, the emergence of a closer U.S.-Bonn axis within NATO allegedly constitutes the greatest threat to Soviet security.³⁸

Soviet Policy Toward the Warsaw Pact

The military role of the Warsaw Pact in Soviet policy has changed considerably since the Pact was created in 1955, largely as a diplomatic counter to West Germany's entry into NATO. Originally the Pact played little part

³⁸See Gromyko's remarks before the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 23, 1966, The New York Times, September 24, 1966. Other Soviet commentary, such as a radio broadcast by Mikhail Stepanov in September 1966, has cited the need to strengthen the Warsaw Pact forces in Europe as a "shield against U.S.-German aggression," on the grounds that despite the war in Vietnam the main focus of U.S. military strategy has not shifted from Europe to Asia, and therefore it would be an error to accept assertions in the Western press that the "situation in Europe has stabilized and there is no threat there to world peace." Moscow radio broadcast, September 6, 1966. Such assertions have been part of a general Soviet propaganda broadside since the fall of 1966 against the alleged threat of a new Bonn-Washington axis. See, for example, M. Voslenskii in Krasnaia zvezda, September 13, 1966; Anatoli Antonov commentary, Moscow broadcast to North America, September 26, 1966; General M. Kazakov, "Fraternal Alliance," Pravda, May 14, 1967.

in Soviet military planning, which was predicated on the assumption that Soviet theater forces would bear the burden of any military undertakings in Europe in which the Soviet Union might become involved. Around 1960-1961, however, Khrushchev instituted a new policy of closer military cooperation with the East European members of the Pact, aimed both at improving the collective military efficiency of the Warsaw alliance and at tightening its political cohesion in the face of "polycentric" tendencies in East Europe.³⁹

This policy has been continued under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime. In particular, the process of joint training and modernization of the East European forces, commensurate with their enlarged responsibilities, has gone forward. Today these forces total over 900,000 men, organized in some 60 divisions, of which about half are at combat strength and readiness, according to Western estimates.⁴⁰ Taken together with the Soviet forces

³⁹For a discussion of this policy shift, see the author's "The Warsaw Pact in Evolution," in Kurt London, ed., Eastern Europe in Transition, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Md., 1966, pp. 207-225.

⁴⁰The Military Balance, 1967-1968, pp. 2-4. See also Raymond L. Garthoff, "The Military Establishment," East Europe, September 1965, pp. 13-14.

deployed in East Europe -- which consist of 20 divisions in East Germany, four in Hungary and two in Poland, plus sizeable tactical air elements and tactical missile units -- the aggregate Warsaw Pact forces in Europe today represent a rather impressive military potential.

From the Soviet viewpoint, however, the fruits of the new policy course toward the Warsaw Pact have not been entirely sweet. While the military efficiency and capability for joint action of the East European components have been improved, the political aim of tightening bloc unity and cohesion through military integration seems to have gone somewhat awry. Instead of being bound closer to Soviet interests, the East European regimes have tended to press for a more influential voice in Pact matters affecting their own interests, such as the sharing of economic and military burdens, and for the formulation of alliance strategy. Rumania, first to jump the traces in the economic field, also has taken the lead in challenging Soviet control of military affairs.⁴¹

⁴¹ See the present author's Soviet Military Power and European Security, RAND Paper P-3429, August 1966, pp. 38-41. Among reported Rumanian demands was that command of the Warsaw Pact forces be rotated to include non-Soviet officers. A delay of some three months in appointing Marshal Yakubovskii to succeed Marshal Grechko as Pact commander in July 1967 tended to bear out speculation that the command issue had arisen within the Pact.

Partly perhaps as a response to Rumanian recalcitrance, but probably more because the focus of Soviet political and strategic interest is directed toward Germany, a rather marked regional differentiation has emerged within the Warsaw alliance between countries of the "northern" and "southern" tiers.⁴²

In sum, there is growing evidence that the Warsaw Pact is evolving into an alliance beset with the familiar interplay of coalition politics, rather than representing a fully compliant instrument of Soviet policy. It would probably be wrong, however, to jump from this to the conclusion that the Soviet Union has ceased to exercise a predominant role in the affairs of the Warsaw bloc. The residual animosities of the Cold War, skillful Soviet play upon East European fears of a resurgent Germany and, above all, the Soviet military presence in East Europe, continue to place limits on the ability of the Warsaw Pact countries

⁴²The "northern tier" countries -- East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union -- have frequently been alluded to by Communist sources as the "first strategic echelon" of the Warsaw Pact. These, of course, are the countries most immediately involved, politically and militarily, with the question of West German aspirations in Central Europe. In the Vlatva joint exercise in Czechoslovakia in September 1966, Hungary for the first time participated on a token basis with the other northern tier countries, while Poland did not directly take part.

to shape their own policies independent of Soviet interests.

Political-Military Relations Under the New Regime

Finally, to complete this survey of Soviet military policy under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, a few words are in order on the state of political-military relations, an area of recurrent tension in the 50 years of Soviet history,⁴³ and one which has taken on new significance in light of special problems generated by the nuclear age. Broadly speaking, these problems fall into three categories: those of maintaining political control over the armed forces in time of crisis and amidst the hazards which a nuclear-missile world may hold; those of meshing industrial-military planning to cope most effectively with the resource-consuming appetite of modern weapon systems; and those of balancing military influence on Soviet policy formulation against the need of political authorities to call increasingly upon the professional expertise of the military leadership.

⁴³ For an exhaustive treatment of this question, see Roman Kolkowicz, The Soviet Military and the Communist Party, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1967.

Signs that all of these questions are alive in the Soviet Union have cropped up under the present regime. An unusual amount of attention, for example, has been given to the command and control problem under nuclear-age conditions, ranging from its technical aspects⁴⁴ to the need for creating the "necessary politico-military organs" to insure coordinated leadership of the country in emergencies, taking cognizance of the fact that "modern weapons are such that the political leadership cannot let them escape its control."⁴⁵ Lessons drawn from mistakes committed by the Soviet leadership prior to and in the initial stages of the last war have been cited also to make the point that under modern conditions, especially in the event of war beginning with a surprise blow, the leadership's "correct and timely evaluation of

⁴⁴Colonel S. Tiushkevich, "The Modern Revolution in Military Affairs: Its Sources and Character," ibid., No. 20, October 1966, pp. 22-23; N. Ia. Sushko and T. R. Kondratkov, eds., Metodologicheskie Problemy Voennoi Teorii i Praktiki (Methodological Problems of Military Theory and Tactics), Voenizdat, Moscow, 1966, pp. 69, 243-265, 279. In the latter volume, it was stated that technical innovations in command and control constitute the third major stage in the military-technical revolution of modern times, the first two stages being the introduction of nuclear weapons and of missiles, respectively.

⁴⁵See Major General V. Zemskov, "For the Theoretical Seminar: An Important Factor for Victory in War," Krasnaia zvezda, January 5, 1967. See also Lt. General I. Zavyalov, ibid., March 31, 1967.

the situation prior to a war, and the reaching of initial decisions" have taken on greatly increased significance.⁴⁶

The enhanced importance under modern conditions of tying together more effectively the economy and the planning and procurement of weapons for the armed forces has been a theme sounded frequently in Soviet writing, often with undertones of civil-military competition for resources.⁴⁷ A suggestion that this issue might be creating pressure for restructuring of traditional Defense Ministry arrangements along more civilian-oriented lines than in the past arose following the death of Marshal Malinovskii, the Defense Minister, in March 1967, when there was a spate of rumors in Moscow that his successor might be Dmitri Ustinov, a Party civilian with a long

⁴⁶ Marshal A. Grechko, "25 Years Ago," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal (Military-Historical Journal), No. 6, June 1966, pp. 10, 15.

⁴⁷ An emphatic statement of the need to work out a coordinated "military-economic policy" to insure weapons production in "properly substantiated proportions" appeared in an April 1967 article by Colonel A. Babin, who also stressed strict Party control of such "complex tasks." See "The Party -- Leader of the USSR Armed Forces," Krasnaia zvezda, April 6, 1967. Another treatment of the question, with emphasis upon "correct and effective use of resources" to "insure solution of all military-economic tasks," was offered by Colonel Ia. Vlasovich, "Modern War and the Economy," Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil, No. 12, June 1967, pp. 27-33. See also: Malinovskii in Kommunist, No. 1, January 1967, p. 34; Sushko and Kondratkov, eds., op. cit., p. 79; Zavyalov, Krasnaia zvezda, March 30, 1967 (first of two articles).

career in the management of defense industry.⁴⁸ Had Ustinov taken over the post customarily occupied by a military professional with command prerogatives over the armed forces, it seems likely that rather sweeping organizational changes would have followed, perhaps with the effect of giving the professional military even less immediate influence on resource decisions than it now possesses. As it turned out, however, the regime shied away from such a radical step, if it had in fact seriously contemplated it, and after a delay of about two weeks Marshal A. A. Grechko was appointed in April 1967.⁴⁹ His background as Warsaw Pact commander for seven years and his record as a middle-of-the-roader among the Soviet marshals made him an appropriate choice for the job, especially if the regime wished to avoid a controversy which might have exacerbated the issue of military influence upon Soviet policy.

⁴⁸ See Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Kremlin Looking for a McNamara To Rule Its Brass," The Washington Post, April 23, 1967; Raymond H. Anderson, "Soviet Affirms Party Rule Over the Military Forces," The New York Times, April 7, 1967.

⁴⁹ At the same time Grechko's appointment to succeed Malinovskii was announced on April 12, it was also made known that three other officers had been elevated in the Defense Ministry hierarchy. They were Marshal Yakubovskii and Generals S. L. Sokolov and I. G. Pavlovskii, men in their middle fifties. This move had the effect of introducing younger blood into the top military echelon, which has been dominated by an over-age generation of World War II marshals.

That this issue too remains a live one under the present regime seems to be indicated by the reappearance in print of what was a familiar dialogue in Khrushchev's day between advocates of the case for a growing military share in the formulation of military doctrine and strategy and defenders of the principle of Party dominance in all aspects of military affairs. Marshal Sokolovskii, an eminent spokesman during the Khrushchev era for more professional military influence upon the strategic planning process, was one of those who again pressed this viewpoint. By way of getting across the point that strategic planning in the nuclear age demands a high level of military expertise, Sokolovskii in April 1966 cited the American case where, according to him, "direct leadership" of the top strategic planning body, the National Security Council, "is exercised by a committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," even though its nominal head is the President.⁵⁰

The other side of the argument, to be sure, was also emphatically restated. Following a Central

⁵⁰ Marshal V. D. Sokolovskii and Major General M. Cherednichenko, "On Modern Military Strategy," Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil, No. 7, April 1966, pp. 62-63. Another example of the tendency to stress the importance of the military contribution to doctrine and strategy may be found in the book edited by Sushko and Kondratkov, Methodological Problems of Military Theory and Practice, pp. 93-95.

Committee plenum which met in closed session in December 1966, a series of forceful reminders of the Party's supremacy in military affairs appeared in the Soviet press. Among the most trenchant of these was an article in early January 1967 by Major General Zemskov, who argued that solution of the complex tasks of modern war involving great coalitions and the energies of whole societies "falls completely within the competence of the political leadership."⁵¹ And as if in direct rebuttal of Sokolovskii, the article pointed out that the need for a single "supreme military-political organ" through which the political leadership would exercise its role had been recognized not only in the Soviet Union, but in other countries like the United States, where "the National Security Council, headed by the President, is such a supreme governmental military-political organ." Omission of reference to "direct leadership" of this body by the Joint Chiefs of Staff apparently was meant to get across the point that top control was not, as Sokolovskii inferred, in military hands.

⁵¹ See previously cited article by Zemskov, Krasnaia zvezda, January 5, 1967. Another emphatic restatement of the thesis of Party supremacy appeared in Colonel Babin's article in Krasnaia zvezda, April 6, 1967. For a discussion of the similar dialogue in Khrushchev's day, see the author's Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads, pp. 100-109.

It would hardly be warranted, however, to suggest that sparring of this kind in the Soviet Union over the respective roles of the professional military and the Party betokens a serious challenge to the policy prerogatives of the latter. The very fact that the Party can summon advocates for its view at will from within the military establishment indicates as much. In short, so far as the evidence of the post-Khrushchev period permits one to judge, the Soviet political leadership still enjoys the last word, as was the case during the first half-century of Soviet history.